



Jared Golden
Congress of the United States
2nd District of Maine
June 25, 2021

The Honorable Andrew Saul
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Saul:

As pandemic conditions improve, I am writing to share concerns that I have heard from my constituents about pandemic-related restrictions on certain Social Security Administration (SSA) services and to encourage SSA to return to pre-pandemic levels of service as soon as possible. The current unavailability of most in-person services at SSA field offices creates difficulty for people who lack broadband access, have certain disabilities, or are otherwise more comfortable with in-person service. An especially frustrating part of these restrictions is the requirement for many people to relinquish control of their original identification documents—like birth certificates, passports, and driver's licenses—in order to complete certain services via mail that they might otherwise have received in person. This process is particularly unworkable for those required to have their Green Card or other proof of legal residency in their possession at all times. While I fully understand why it was necessary to limit in-person interactions at the height of the pandemic, I believe it is important to recognize that these limitations have had negative impacts on SSA beneficiaries and other members of the public.

With a steadily increasing share of Americans vaccinated against COVID-19 and the CDC's judgment in May that fully vaccinated people may resume a wide range of indoor activities without requiring social distancing or masking to remain safe, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance on June 10th that directs SSA and other agencies to plan for employees' reentry to offices. In light of the public's need to access SSA services in a timely and convenient way, I request that SSA expedite its OMB-mandated reentry planning to increase staffing at field offices to enable a wider set of in-person services, and to end the requirement for people to part with their original identification documents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for the SSA workforce's dedication to serving the American people during a difficult time. Please contact me, or direct your staff to contact my staff, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jared F. Golden
Member of Congress